

Understanding value-driven delivery

Leading through change and challenges

Agile opportunities

Course review: Agile in practice

Optional: Uncovering job opportunities

Video: Creating a job search plan
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Practice Quiz: Activity: Build a job search project plan
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Job search project plan

The goal of this reading is to help you take control of your job search timeline and provide you with strategies for advancing your job search process. It will be most useful for people who need to find a job within a certain timeframe and who want to be as effective as possible at every stage of the process.

This plan will help you design your timeline, set your expectations, monitor your progress, and make adjustments, as necessary, to improve your outcomes. To make the most of these recommendations, plan to put them into action once you have your resume completed and are ready to start actively applying for opportunities.

Understanding the job search timeline

The first step in planning your job search timeline is understanding the main factors that influence how it plays out. These factors are:

- 1) the time it will take you to apply to the right job (the company that ultimately hires you)
- 2) the time between the application and the offer

For example, if you estimate that it will take you four weeks to apply for the right job and another three weeks between the application and the offer, you should plan to receive a job offer in seven weeks.

We'll begin by discussing how to develop estimates for your job search so you can plan your own timeline accordingly.

The time it will take to apply to the right job

How long it takes you to apply to the company that you eventually work for depends on how many total roles you need to apply for, and the frequency of your applications. For example, if you determine that you'll need to apply to 50 roles, you can do this in ten weeks at a rate of five applications per week, or in two weeks at a rate of 25 applications per week.

It is important to estimate how many total roles you will need to apply for, as this will help you determine how many applications you'll need to submit every week to reach your goals. To make this estimate, try and ascertain what you expect the following numbers to be, then bring these numbers together for a total number of applications you should plan to submit:

- Application-to-first interview success ratio
- First interview to second interview success ratio
- Success rate of any additional interview rounds (as applicable)
- Last interview-to-offer ratio

Here is an example:

If you presume a 20% chance of getting a first interview, a 25% chance of passing the first and second interview rounds, and a 25% chance of getting a job offer after the second interview, then you need to plan on submitting 80 applications to get a job offer.

These are metrics that you can influence. The quality of your application materials will impact how frequently you are invited to a first interview, and your interviewing skills will help you get from one round to the next.

The time between the application and the offer

In almost all cases, you will need to apply for the job and complete a series of interviews before receiving an offer. The amount of time that passes between the application and the job offer will depend on how many rounds of interviews there are, and how much time passes between each step. It is important to understand that this timeline is mostly in the control of the employer. Once you submit an application, they will invite you to interview based on their scheduling. For most roles, this process can take between two and four weeks. This can vary by industry, company, and role.

Track your job search

At this point in developing your plan, you should have a clear idea of how long you expect your job search to take. As you progress in your search, we recommend that you record and monitor the accuracy of your initial assumptions about your timeline. This will help you determine whether you are on track to receive your job offer under the timeline you first established, and where in the process you might be able to optimize your performance. Assumptions to track should include:

- Application-to-interview success ratio
- Success rate of each round of interviews (e.g., how many first interviews led to second interviews)
- Number of interview rounds for each company

Tip: It is always a good idea to track details of your job search activities. You'll gain insight into your success metrics and stay on top of important job search information that might otherwise get lost as your activities progress. You can use a tracker like [this one](#) to track your networking activities, application materials, action items, and notes from conversations.

Next, we'll discuss how you can improve the efficiency of your job search activities at different points in the process.



Getting interviews

There are a number of steps you can take to increase the number of interview opportunities you receive.

Apply to more jobs

Most people will be invited to interviews somewhere between 5% and 50% of the time. This means that you will need to submit between four and twenty applications to be invited to a single first-round interview. The more applications you submit, the more interview invitations you'll receive.

Use the recommendations below to ensure that you are earning as many opportunities as possible:

- Make sure you are monitoring major job aggregators (engines pulling jobs from multiple sites) such as Indeed and ZipRecruiter. You can set up alerts to receive new postings by email.
- Separately track postings on LinkedIn jobs, as they might not be captured by aggregators.
- Identify companies that you'd be interested in working for based on their geographic location or other parameters. Check their career pages directly once or twice a week for new opportunities that might not appear on aggregators.
- Make sure you include remote jobs in your search and consider adding other locations if relocation is an option for you.
- Monitor local job referral and networking groups on Facebook and other online communities where recruiters and hiring managers share opportunities not posted elsewhere.
- Send an email to people in your network, letting them know about your job search and asking them to share relevant opportunities with you. Make it easy for them to help you by explaining what type of role you are looking for and including your resume.

Optimize your applications

In addition to increasing the number of applications you submit, you can improve the efficacy of each application by optimizing your resume and getting referrals.

First off, make sure your resume follows all the best practices outlined in this reading.

Next, get feedback on your resume from other people. Recommendations from professionals in your target field are best, but others with experience in hiring can also help. Keep in mind that people might have different preferences, so don't feel that you need to incorporate every word of feedback you receive. Instead, collect input from multiple people and look for advice that is consistent and makes sense to you. Your goal is to create a resume that is captivating to as many employers as possible!

Finally, ask for referrals. Referrals are generally the best way to turn more of your applications into interviews. Most companies review employee referrals ahead of other applicants, so, at the very least, a referral increases the chances of your application being properly considered. In addition, employees referring you might be able to provide additional information on the role or the status of your application.

- Before applying for a role, **check LinkedIn** to see if you, or someone you know, might have a connection at the company. Ask for a referral or an introduction.
- Create a list of **companies where you know people**. Go through each company's careers page to see if there are relevant open roles for which you can request a referral.
- Make sure that **everyone you know is aware of your job search**, so they can send opportunities your way. Reach out to people directly, post on social media, and mention it in conversations. Remember that opportunities can come from unexpected places such as your barber, book club, church, and more.

Tip: Some companies offer referral bonuses to their employees, so even a stranger might be open to referring you if you are a qualified candidate. Be creative when seeking out referrals, and don't hesitate to ask.

Passing interviews

The next milestone is getting from one interview round to the next. Companies generally interview multiple candidates at every stage, so it's to be expected that you won't always advance to the next round. The good news is that you can increase your interview success rate by practicing and preparing. In the next course, we have an entire lesson focused on interview tips from project and program managers at Google, mock interview practice and more!

Key takeaway

If you've followed the strategies laid out in this guide, you should know how to develop a timeline for your job search, monitor your progress, and troubleshoot your applications and interviews to improve your outcomes.

We encourage you to take the time to record your job search activities—starting with your first application—even if you are not actively trying to establish and maintain a particular timeline. Every application and interview experience is a learning opportunity. Plus, your goals might change over time, and information about your previous applications and interviews will help you analyze your past performance, set realistic expectations for future searches.

Knowing what to expect, and having visibility into what's actually happening in your job search, is key to being in control of your employment, and landing the job!

Mark as completed

